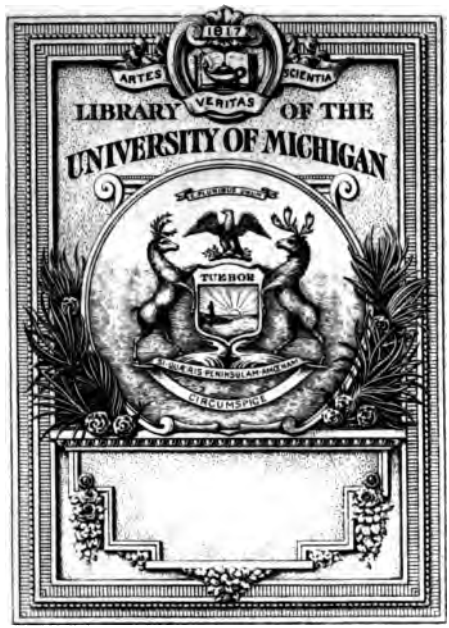
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A

BRIEF INQUIRY

INTO THE

PRESENT STATE

OF

AGRICULTURE

IN THE

SOUTHERN PART OF IRELAND,

&c.

Price 3s. 6d.

S. Gosnell, *Printer, Little Queen Street.*

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INTO THE

Present State

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IN THE

SOUTHERN PART OF IRELAND,

AND

ITS INFLUENCE

ON THE

MANNERS AND CONDITION OF THE LOWER CLASSES OF THE PEOPLE:

WITH SOME

CONSIDERATIONS

UPON THE

Ecclesiastical Establishment of that Country.

BY

JOSHUA KIRBY TRIMMER.

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TO THE PUBLIC.

I HAVE been accidentally led to the consideration of this subject by visiting, on business, the sister island.

I went there with my mind prejudiced with the prevalent idea that the manners of the lower order of people were radically and incorrigibly depraved, and that it did not arise from any exterior causes, by the gradual removal of which their condition might be ameliorated, and their manners improved.

Whether, in changing my opinion, in consequence of a short residence amongst them, I have formed a truer estimate of their character, it will be for the public to determine.

I pretend not to offer the following observations as any thing but an outline, with the hope of attracting to the subject a more distinct consideration than it has hitherto received.

I am aware it may be objected to me, that as my residence was of short continuance, my knowledge of the subject is too confined to entitle my opinion to great weight; and the duties I owe to a numerous family will not permit me to pursue the inquiry to the extent that my feelings would prompt me. I have, therefore, brought it hastily forward, with the hope that it may pass into abler hands, to correct the errors and fill up the blanks I have left.

I find it will be necessary, for the purpose of shewing the disadvantages of the present imperfect state of agriculture, and how far it influences the habits and customs of the labouring poor, to describe minutely some of the most trivial circumstances attending

it, which would otherwise appear unworthy of notice.

The subject will be best placed in its true light by tracing the different gradations of improvement from the first efforts of individuals to supply themselves with food, in cultivating, by their own labour, a small portion of land, to the highest degree of advancement to which the general agriculture of the country may be said to have arrived in the hands of those who cultivate it as a trade; and by noticing the causes which have led to the present practice and checked further improvement.

With that view, I shall divide the agriculture of the country into three classes, beginning with the most simple, and tracing it upwards.

I wish it, however, to be understood that the following observations have no reference to such farms as are kept in the hands of

opulent proprietors. These form but an inconsiderable number.

The great proportion of the agriculture is in the hands of the tenantry; and in their practice must be sought the present state of it.

Having in view not merely to point out the defects, and required improvements in agriculture, but likewise to present a picture of the state of the poor, I shall, as being materially connected with the subject, make some observations on the condition of the Churches of the Establishment, and residences of the clergy, and endeavour to suggest some means of improvement in respect to these subjects; and likewise offer some remarks on the manner of supporting the poor.

In this performance, I trust I shall not have made any enemies to the cause, by plainly stating things in the light in which they appear to me; and I disown any en-

deavour to gain friends by partial representation.

I have no interest in view but that of the people whose cause I have been led to consider by a temporary residence among them; and no other wish than to see their condition improved by a wise and enlightened policy, founded upon a true knowledge of the nature and source of the evils under which they suffer.

A

BRIEF INQUIRY,

&c.

It is scarcely possible to describe the painful feelings a stranger experiences on first passing through the southern provinces of Ireland, from seeing the manner in which the poorer order of the inhabitants live.

Their houses, which are called cabins, for the most part consist of the very lowest class of mud cottages, containing only one room; the floor no other than the bare ground, and the roof formed of boughs of

trees, thatched; frequently they are without any chimney or window: when they have the former, it commonly is made of a few sticks rising perpendicularly from the roof, either plastered with mud, or thatched with straw; and if they have the latter, it is seldom more than a foot square, and, from the thickness of the wall, can scarcely admit any rays of light.

The inconveniences, however, caused from their thus living in a manner half suffocated with the smoke of their turf fires, and almost without light to their dwellings, at the same time that they arise in some degree from necessity in their not being able to provide themselves with any better home, are by no means the greatest evils attending their habitations, but are far exceeded by some which they seem voluntarily to incur—I mean the suffering their hogs and other animals to shelter under the same roof with themselves.

There is scarcely a tenant of any cabin who is not possessed of one hog of a very large kind, and, from its being the custom to keep them to the age of two, and sometimes three years, it becomes of an enormous size.

To the sale of this animal they look for the source from which they are to pay the rent of their cabin and small potatoe-garden; of course he becomes their chief care.

During the day, he is suffered to range about at large, and returns when he is in want of food; his potatoes, and those nearly of as good a quality as the family subsist upon, are then boiled for him, and with as much care as for themselves*.

The cabin door in general, whether for

* As these persons possess but few utensils, it frequently happens that the hog must eat out of the pot in which the potatoes are boiled for the family.

the accommodation of this quadruped, to admit light, or to suffer the smoke to escape, is left open; and he enters and goes abroad at pleasure; but, by being usually fed at the threshold, he frequently remains there an obstruction and nuisance to the approach.

As the potatoe crop is what they depend upon, as well for their own support, as for the food of the hog, and as that is a crop which cannot be repeatedly grown on the same land without being highly manured, it is an object of importance with them to collect as much of it as possible, and to treasure it up for the ensuing season with the greatest care. As it accumulates, they place it for security close to the entrance of the cabin, and when possessed of a considerable quantity, they form a heap on each side of the door.

The floors of the cabins, to prevent the necessity of raising the walls high, are

frequently sunk below the surface of the ground, and the suillage of these heaps of manure thus drains *into* instead of *from* them.

In large villages, and often in other cases, they are built together in rows, to save side-walls, which greatly adds to the inconvenience.

In these comfortless habitations, the parents and a numerous family of half-naked and unemployed children live, occupying themselves one side of the cabin, sleeping perhaps on the most simple, if any, kind of bed, laid immediately on the earthen floor; whilst the other side of the cabin is inhabited by the hogs and poultry, and sometimes, but very seldom, a cow.

That human beings should pass their days in so deplorable a state of existence, excited in me a mixture of pain and astonishment, and at the same time led me to reflect on the causes which could bring creatures en-

dued with reason, and capable of distinguishing comfort from misery, thus voluntarily to add to the misfortunes incidental to their lot, by admitting habits which deprive them of a comfortable and cleanly dwelling.

Whether this country was or was not once in a more flourishing state, neither history nor tradition satisfactorily informs us; but of its present condition we are all able to judge.

The southern part being nearly without any kind of manufacture, and the present state of agriculture not being able to afford higher wages for common labourers than about sixpence per day, and giving employment, for the most part, only to the heads of families, it would be impossible, under the present circumstances, for the father to support his numerous offspring from his earnings, were it not for the use of potatoes as their food. For the cultivation of these it is necessary that he should rent,

in addition to the cabin, which is to protect him from the inclemency of the weather, a small piece of ground, as a potatoe-garden.

Besides providing this kind of food for his family, he has also to provide the means of paying the rent for his dwelling and land; and as every one has of necessity the same object in view, that of obtaining food by his own culture, there can be no market by which to convert into money the surplus of what is grown by each beyond what the wants of his family require, especially as it consists of an article more suited to be consumed near where it is grown, than for removal to a distance: it therefore was necessary to find means of converting the surplus produce in such a manner as, by becoming saleable, would at once bring a return in money.

The most ready way of doing this was by feeding with it an animal the least costly

and the most marketable when fat; the hog seemed best adapted to this purpose; and the export trade for pork facilitating and encouraging the plan, it was readily adopted.

Unprovided with any separate building in which to shelter and confine this animal, and either unable to procure the means of making one, or, from the frequent manner of building the cabins in rows, precluded from the convenience of erecting it; and warmth being essential to his thriving, during severe weather, the hog was admitted perhaps at first only occasionally and with reluctance, as an inhabitant of the same dwelling with the family. Custom soon reconciles habits, which are even attended with inconvenience and destitute of comfort; and that is often considered indispensably necessary, which has merely grown imperceptibly from incidental causes.

To this first unfavourable state of their agriculture, and the circumstance of the greater proportion of this part of the country still resting at it, do I attribute the great want of cleanliness which cannot but be acknowledged to exist among these people both in their persons and dwellings.

2. In the next class I place the small farmers, each of whom being possessed of a trifling capital, is able to rent a somewhat larger extent of land, and in addition to his own labour to obtain the assistance of a horse, and to cultivate a small quantity of grain for sale.

These form a very numerous class in the southern parts of Ireland, and a larger share of the agriculture of the country may be said to be in their hands than in those of substantial farmers.

With their scanty and slender means it cannot be expected to prosper much.

Their stock consists of one horse, a small

car, and perhaps half a dozen sheep besides a few hogs, and in some cases a cow.

These men also consider the potatoe as their main crop.

It is only by mutually assisting each other with their horses to form a team, and using the plough of such as possess one, that they are able to till their land; and consequently where so many interests are concerned frequent interruptions occur, and the land receives but a very small degree of culture.

As this class in general are also unprovided with any other buildings than their cabin, their manner of life and habits differ but little from those whom I have already described.

Their sheep are of a wild, unprofitable kind, and, from the indifferent state of the fences, are under the necessity of being fastened in pairs with a band of straw round

their necks, in the manner that hounds are coupled, or, by the same means, to have one of their hind legs confined to a fore one; but, in spite of their fetters, they are continually breaking pasture, and grazing on corn and other crops not intended for them.

Some likewise keep a few goats, which, though attempted to be confined in the same way as the sheep, are less amenable to restraint, and prove still more destructive to the growing crops.

As they have no barns, the corn is set up in very small stacks, not unlike the Arrish Mows* of Devonshire, containing only as much as can conveniently be thrashed in a day.

* From the frequent rain in Devonshire, and the custom of carrying the corn from the field on the backs of horses, they would be unable to get it all home with sufficient expedition to secure it dry: it is in consequence set up in the field in stacklets, containing about a waggon-load each, and these are called *Arrish Mows*.

In fine weather, they thrash in the open air: in case of a long continuance of bad weather at the time they wish to dispose of their corn, they are obliged to perform this operation in the cabin.

The small produce of their harvest they immediately take to the provision-merchant, of which order there are some in all the cities, principal towns, and sea-ports, by whom it is purchased, and deposited in their storehouses, in general for exportation.

To these merchants they also dispose of their hogs, when fat, either taking them alive to the market, or, first killing them, they take them at once to the *stores*, when they are immediately salted down for exportation likewise.

3. The third class of agriculturists consists of the richer tenants, who, being possessed of somewhat larger capitals, are enabled to cultivate upon a more extensive

scale; but the practice even of this class is very imperfect, and their means are contracted.

Their farms may be said to be entirely without any suitable buildings. A barn of any size is almost unknown among them, and their only substitute is a small and inconvenient thrashing-room. Their corn-stacks are consequently numerous, and very small, to enable them to thrash out the contents of each as quickly as possible after breaking into it, lest it should be injured by exposure to the weather.

In the management of their arable land there is but little to describe. Their implements are few, imperfect, and ill-constructed. Carts and waggons are not yet in use among them; and the common car of the country is so ill adapted to the carriage of any thing like an effective load, that but little dispatch can be made with it; and as each is drawn by only one horse, the attend-

ance of a man is required to every single small load.

The beasts of draft are horses of a light kind, active and hardy; but as each farmer possesses but a small stock of them in proportion to the size of his farm, the land receives but a very inadequate degree of tillage.

In respect to the succession of their crops, even with this class of agriculturists, the potatoe crop stands first, as that on which the manure is chiefly expended; it is succeeded by wheat, then by oats, of which a much greater quantity is grown than of barley.

Neither turnips nor cultivated grasses are yet in use, and consequently the land *receives neither* the benefit of the former being fed off by sheep, nor rest during the time it would be occupied by the latter; and the present high rent is too great a discouragement to fallowing.

Their sheep are neither trained nor well suited to the fold, and therefore they are not kept in flocks; and their own sheep, as well as those of their neighbours, which have been already described, are continually breaking in upon and destroying the crops. The fences are in general either stone walls, topped with earth, and furze growing upon it, or banks of earth only with the same fringe of furze. Hedge-row timber there is none.

In this class are to be placed the dairy farmers and graziers. The former are numerous in those parts suited to the purpose. The produce is wholly converted into butter, of which large quantities are exported.

The summer grazing of oxen and cows is carried on to a very considerable extent on the rich feeding land, which is principally in the counties of Limerick and Tipperary. The most of the beef, when fat, is slaugh-

tered at the different sea-ports, and salted for exportation.

HAVING now briefly sketched the present state of agriculture in this part of the country, I shall proceed to point out what appear to me the principal causes which have hitherto retarded its progress and checked its advancement.

As potatoes now form the leading feature in Irish agriculture, and the crop on which the manure is expended, it becomes necessary to inquire whether they were so largely adopted from their superior value, or whether in some degree from necessity.

I wish it were possible to ascertain the state of agriculture before they were introduced; but I can meet with no written accounts on the subject; and I find it impossible to gain, from the best-informed persons, any satisfactory traditional account.

The first introduction of them into Ire-

land was by Sir Walter Raleigh, who, on his way from Spanish America, touched at Youghal, in the county of Cork, and having some of the roots on board his fleet, landed them there; from whence, by degrees, they have been distributed over the island; but it was not till after a long period of years that they came into general cultivation.

Seeing that potatoes are now become the chief food of by far the greatest part of the inhabitants, the question naturally arises, "Upon what did these people subsist before they were introduced?" To this I can obtain no satisfactory answer; for the general one, that the country was by no means so populous as at present, is far from being so to me. Even allowing to the fullest extent that can be asked, yet the numbers by which the population has increased fall far short of the numbers who now subsist chiefly on potatoes. There must, therefore,

have been in the country a greater quantity of other kinds of food than at present.

Were I to hazard a conjecture, it would be that, prior to the cultivation of them, milk formed a larger part of the subsistence of the labouring class of inhabitants than at present. When the country was little enclosed, cows could be kept in the state of commonage at less cost, though the general produce of the soil could not be so great.

As landed property became more valuable, and population increased, enclosures took place; and it was necessary to adopt such cultivated crops as were best suited to the state of the country.

The farms being, as I have already mentioned, without barns and other buildings suited to the corn-crop, and the country of late years being in a manner destitute of timber to build them, from a cause which I shall hereafter state; and potatoes, in consequence of the simple way in which they

can be secured from the weather, being a crop which required no farm building, they became extensively cultivated.

I think no person who is well acquainted with British agriculture, and has seen the soil in general of Ireland, will deny that with a proper culture and conveniences for the purpose, it is capable of yielding a produce, even without any assistance from potatoes, far exceeding the demand of food for the present inhabitants: and although the land will yield a much larger bulk of potatoes than of corn, or of animal food, yet a greater quantity of the former than of either of the latter must be consumed to gain the same degree of sustenance. If this be admitted, I think it fair to conclude, as I have done, that it was in consequence of the imperfect knowledge of agriculture, and the want of implements and farm buildings suited to the corn crop; and from the facility with which potatoes could be cultivated

and secured against injury from the weather, rather than because of their superior value as food, that they obtained the preference.

I am aware that I am treading on tender ground, in offering any suggestions which may appear to discourage the established culture of potatoes. I am willing to allow them every valuable property they can be said to possess, but I cannot consider them entitled to the large share which they engross in the agriculture of the country. As a crop they are a great cleanser of the land, and an excellent matrix for wheat. They require a considerable quantity of manure, for which they make no ready return to the land on which they are grown, by being fed off by sheep, nor yield any straw for fodder and manure, like corn. They are rather troublesome to harvest, but subject to no risk during it, if taken up before the frost sets in; and above all, they require no farm buildings. The produce is very large, but

the nutritive qualities of corn are contained in much less compass.

As food for cattle, they are valuable, and can be better preserved from the weather than turnips, and to a later season in the year; but are much more troublesome, and from first to last require more labour to be expended upon them.

As human food, they perhaps come nearer to farinaceous vegetables than any other root.

They are, upon the whole, a powerful assistant to the corn crop, but by no means worthy wholly to usurp its place.

A cause which I consider as having most materially checked the regular progress of agriculture is the high price which land has reached in consequence of the present system of leases having outstepped (and whilst such a system continues, it must ever retard) the advancement of agriculture and the general prosperity of the country.

Before I state the manner of leasing land which prevails in Ireland, and the evil effects arising from it, I must beg leave to digress, by describing what I mean by the price of land having outstepped the advancement of agriculture and the general prosperity of the country.

We must ever consider the agriculture and commerce of a country as mutually assisting each other, and that upon their joint prosperity the riches and flourishing state of it depend.

The prosperous state of agriculture gives the first spring to commerce; and if the latter, from the industry, enterprise, and invention of the people, become extensive, it will increase the consumption, and by creating new capital, will advance the price of the produce of the land, and consequently the value of the land itself.

Commerce consists in supplying other nations with either the natural and cultivated

produce, or the manufactures of a country, on better terms than they can supply themselves. Thus the commerce of some countries consists in ore, timber, grain, fruit, wine, wool, and other produce of the earth; and that of other countries in manufactured wares.

The influence of a fertile soil and genial climate may aid the former, viz. the trade of natural produce; and its extent will in some degree be governed by the industry of its inhabitants: but, still, by the nature of things, it must be circumscribed within much narrower limits than the latter.

The commerce which consists of manufactured wares arises from the invention, industry, and enterprise of the inhabitants of a country, and may become more extensive than the former; but as all manufactures are produced by labour, it will always be in some degree regulated by the price at which the labourer can buy his

food, which food must necessarily be of such a quality as to support his strength through the exertions of a laborious employment.

A widely-extended commerce of manufactures consequently causes an increased consumption of food; for, without taking into the calculation whether the population of a country is increased by the prosperous state of these manufactures, certain it is, that the labourers employed in them consume much more, perhaps double the quantity of food, than those people whose labour does not require the same exertions of strength, and who, therefore, do not need food of so nutritious a quality.

Thus then a commerce of this kind gives vigour to agriculture by increasing the consumption of its produce, and providing those who consume it with ampler means of purchasing it.

But if, by any real or factitious cause, the price of land, and consequently the produce

of it, gains such a height as to clog those manufactures with too great a charge of labour, both the commerce and agriculture must suffer. By a real cause, I mean that which arises from the consumption exceeding the supply. This, however, may be modified in two ways; first, by an importation of grain from those countries which having a produce greater than their demand, can dispose of their surplus at an inferior price; and secondly, by the invention of artificial labour in machinery, by which means the manufactures of a country may be extended without an increased supply of food.

Through this last means principally has Great Britain extended its commerce without its having as yet been materially checked by the increasing price of provisions; but both these means must have bounds. The importation of grain may be insufficient, or may entirely fail. The invented machinery

may after a time find its way into those countries whose provisions and labour are cheaper than our own, and who will then be enabled to supply themselves with those manufactures at a lower rate.

Having endeavoured to explain what I consider to be the relative interests of the agriculture and commerce of a country, I shall proceed to mention how I think these interests are affected in Ireland.

It is generally acknowledged that the commerce of Ireland has not kept pace with that of Great Britain. That of the south of Ireland in particular principally consists in the export of provisions. Manufactures not having flourished so as to create an extensive commerce in them, and thereby cause an increased home-consumption of food, and afford the means of purchasing it; and agriculture not having arrived at such perfection as to raise the intrinsic value of land, we must look to another

cause for it, and that I consider to consist in the manner of leasing the land: I mean the system of letting and reletting at improved rents, and thus reserving only a rent-charge upon it. Whether this first originated in consequence of the distant residence of many of the proprietors of estates, who therefore preferred obtaining a certain though small rent in the most easy mode, or a sum by way of premium for a lease; or whether the land, when in an unenclosed state, was thus leased out with a view of getting it enclosed and brought into cultivation, it is now needless to inquire. At present the practice almost generally prevails.

In the first instance, land is let by the proprietor either on a lease for lives, or a long term, at a low rent, not unfrequently at a few shillings per acre, but without any restriction from reletting. The lessee again lets for a higher rent, and perhaps a some-

what shorter term; thus gaining a fixed yearly profit, with some remote prospect of further gain.

It then in the same way passes through many hands, until at length it is rented for a very short term, or only at will, by the cultivator, for perhaps nearly as many pounds, as it was in the first instance let for shillings. The land thus becomes in a manner the property of none.

The lessees having but a trifling profit out of it, or regarding their share of future interest in it as too remote and contingent to demand their individual interference; and the proprietor having reserved little or no control over it by restrictive clauses, has scarcely the power to interfere in the management of it himself.

From these causes the timber when once cut down is never replaced; for the lessees have no interest in doing it, and the landlord has no power, or, if any, his prospect

of advantage is too distant to attract his exertions to do it.

In consequence of this deficiency of timber, there are not the means at hand for erecting farm buildings, and no person is sufficiently interested to use any extraordinary efforts in procuring them.

The cultivator too, from having so short a time in the land, has but little inducement to preserve the fences, where there are any, or to make and plant them where there are none. Neither can he afford to run any risk in attempting improvements in husbandry. His whole concern during the time he occupies the land, is to obtain the most he can from it, however disadvantageously to the estate, in that way which his experience teaches him will just enable him to pay his rent, and gain a scanty subsistence.

It is not my purpose to enumerate all the pernicious effects of this system. It is the

very pest of the country, the canker-worm of its prosperity.

I know it is a received opinion that the high rent of land tends to the improvement of agriculture by calling forth exertion. This, to a certain extent, I am ready to admit. I wish not to encourage indolence, by allowing a profit without labour; but there is a wide difference between having the bow unstrung, and always keeping it bent. In the one case it is useless, in the other it must break.

I would instance the example before us. I am acquainted with no place where land has risen to so high a price, compared with the circumstances, as in this part of the country; and I ask, has it produced, or is it producing, a superior course of husbandry; can agriculture itself flourish under it, or give vigour to commerce and manufactures, or produce any one beneficial effect to the general system?

The next subject I wish to consider is the influence which this state of agriculture has on the habits and condition of the lower classes of the people.

I have already said that I consider the extensive cultivation of potatoes, and the consequent custom of applying a great proportion of them to the fattening of hogs, as the means of converting a part of the produce into money, to have arisen in a great measure from the want of farm buildings; and that the scarcity of timber has tended to prevent their making suitable buildings for their live stock, which circumstance has led them, from necessity, to shelter them under the same roof with themselves.

This occasions them to live in a constant state of offensive uncleanliness. Custom reconciles them to it, and by degrees it enters into all their habits.

The animal which they have chosen as that which is to consume part of the pro-

duce of the land for the purpose of converting it into money, yields them no wool, as the sheep does, and which would have given employment to their families in manufacturing it.

The cow would have afforded them the nutritive food of milk, a present return of money by butter, for which there is an extensive demand for exportation, and at length it might be fatted. But the choice was dictated, in some degree, by necessity, and established by custom. The sheep could not well be chosen, for the home consumption of mutton is small; and it cannot be salted (at least it has not yet been ascertained that it can) so as to be used for exportation and sea-stone.

Here then the manufacture and commerce of the country have received a check from the imperfection of agriculture: for could sheep have been fed with part of the produce of the land, instead of hogs, there

would have created a woollen manufacture, and this would have aided agriculture by bringing a return of money, and causing a home consumption of those animals on which the wool was grown.

In not making choice of the cow as that on which to expend part of their cultivated produce, they were, in some measure, also guided by necessity. In general their means were insufficient for the purchase of one, or, if competent to it, the returns to be expected from its sale were more distant. Besides this, there was a want of good fences to confine it; and the present course of husbandry was not adapted to it.

Thus then must the state of agriculture, the habits and condition of the inhabitants, and the manufactures and prosperity of the country, continue until some great exertions are made in their favour.

No improved course of husbandry can be

readily adopted whilst the present scarcity of timber for farm buildings continues, nor can the generality of cultivators be expected to copy from the examples that may be set them, whilst in the present state of things those people, as I have already said, can afford to risk nothing in experiment, but must cultivate in that course which, from experience, they consider will bring them a certain immediate profit. Before refinements can be received, a general improvement in the early stages of husbandry must take place. It is otherwise building a beautiful edifice on an imperfect foundation.

In this place I must be allowed to express my fears that the well-meant efforts which have been made by the Agricultural Societies will prove very inadequate to their object. One of their great objects is the introduction of cattle of a superior kind;

but, as they are much more costly, they must, for a length of time, be confined to the hands of men of property, and can be of no immediate service to those who are in want of an animal, more useful and equally cheap, to substitute for the one on which they now expend part of the produce of the land.

Having now treated of the state of the agriculture, and of its influence on the habits and condition of the lower classes of the people, I shall proceed to shew the present state of the churches of the establishment and glebe houses, and the disadvantages resulting from it.

To ascertain whether churches were or were not once more numerous in this part of Ireland than at present, neither history nor tradition need be referred to. Many an ivied fragment dismally informs that there once stood a church where is now, alas! only a heap of

mouldering ruins, accompanied by a burial-ground, reserved seemingly to lament the loss.

It would be equally fruitless and unsatisfactory now to inquire whether, from the insufficiency of funds to support them, the churches first went to decay, and from the dilapidation of the glebe houses the clergy became non-resident, or whether, in consequence of the clergy absenting themselves, these calamities arose. Certain it is, that the evils exist to an enormous and most alarming extent.

I shall not, however, rest upon bare assertion, but extract, from a work* of credit, a statement of the number of parishes and churches, with the estimated population, and number of acres in each

*Rev. Dan. Augustus Beaufort's Memoir of a Map of Ireland, published in 1792.

county. As I profess to treat only of the southern part of Ireland, the following table includes from the county of Dublin to Galway, with the counties between and south of these.

SOUTHERN DIVISION OF IRELAND.

Counties.	No. of Parishes.	No. of Churches.	Estimated No. of Inhabitants.	No. of Acres, English Measure.
Dublin -	107	58	198,000	228,211
Kildare -	113	23	56,000	380,352
King's County	52	25	74,500	453,370
Galway -	116	28	142,000	1,739,591
Wicklow -	58	20	58,000	500,600
Queen's County	50	26	82,000	378,023
Wexford -	142	42	115,000	550,888
Carlow -	50	13	44,000	220,098
Kilkenny -	127	31	100,000	482,464
Tipperary -	186	46	169,000	882,398
Limerick -	125	33	170,000	622,975
Clare -	79	19	96,000	765,042
Waterford -	74	21	110,000	425,692
Cork -	269	105	416,000	1,697,920*
Kerry -	83	20	107,000	1,040,487
	1631	510	1,937,500	10,368,111

* I have here corrected a typographical error in Mr. Beaufort's work, which, by the omission of a figure, makes the number of acres 167,920.

As Mr. Beaufort has not stated the number of glebe houses in each county, I have not been able to include them in the preceding table; but as there are only three hundred and fifty-four in the whole island, and much fewer in the south than in the north, I may fairly be allowed to say that they cannot exceed one hundred and seventy-seven, in the southern division, or somewhat less than *one* for every *nine* parishes.

It appears from the work which I have above quoted that the whole island contains—

2,436 parishes,
*1,001 churches,
354 glebe houses,
3,850,000 inhabitants,
20,000,000 acres, English measure,

giving an average of nearly four thousand

* Mr. Beaufort's work states the number of churches to be 1,101; but this is evidently a typographical error.

inhabitants, and an extent of country to each church equal to twenty thousand acres; and upwards of fifty thousand acres to each glebe house.

Now making an allowance of four millions of acres, a one-fifth of the gross amount, for waste land in lakes, rivers, bogs, mountains, and roads, there will remain sixteen millions of acres of *culturable* land, giving an average of sixteen thousand to every church.

Another subject on which I wish to offer some observations is the manner of providing for the needy. As there are no poor laws or parochial rates, the only mode of relieving their wants is by voluntary contributions collected in the churches during divine service, in the same manner as upon briefs in England—a scanty and inadequate means.

I am far from intending, by this observation, the slightest disrespect to the people of

Ireland. Their charity I believe to be as large as that of the inhabitants of this country; but the burden of supporting the poor is thus thrown on the liberal and humane, whilst the niggardly and unfeeling, of which class there will always be some, bear no share of it. Charity, by such constant calls, becomes languid; and the well-disposed, finding the weight thus wholly cast upon them, withhold their bounty.

The food on which the Irish chiefly subsist may be well suited to the support of life, whilst the vigour of youth animates the frame; but in declining age, and when the vital spark is on the point of expiring, surely some further help is needed, some comfort to assuage the pangs of disease and smooth the bed of sickness.

Unhappily for the district before us, the disadvantages I have related seem to have

operated still further to its prejudice, by interrupting the union of the different ranks of society. From the want of prosperity in agriculture and commerce, that class which consists of a respectable yeomanry and opulent tenantry is hardly to be seen; and the country gentlemen, and perhaps the clergy, in consequence of not finding themselves surrounded by an agreeable neighbourhood, have, in a great measure, become non-resident.

Thus the chain, which in this our country so happily unites the throne to the cottage, is broken. Where society consists of different ranks so nearly allied, that, by a small condescension in the superior rank, it easily unites with the next below it, this, in return, looks up, and claims a relation. All are thus firmly linked together, and form an entire, regular, and harmonious body.

I HAVE now shewn what I consider to be the defects, and the disadvantages arising from them, in this part of the country; and shall proceed to mention some of the means by which I trust they might be removed, and some principles laid for future improvement.

In doing it, I shall pursue the same order in which I began, by stating, first, what are my ideas with regard to the agriculture.

The first step towards improvement seems to be for landlords, as their leases fall in, to suffer none to be granted on such a tenure as to allow intermediate interests to exist between themselves and the cultivators of the land. This, however, would be a work of time; and whilst it is going on, some subordinate measures should be pursued.

The desirable objects seem to be, planting and preserving live hedges and hedge-row timber, and adopting a course of husbandry

in which turnips, cultivated grasses, and the sheep-fold, would form a part. The white thorn appears, from those places where any is planted, to prosper; and wherever timber has a fair chance, it equally succeeds.

I consider it would be proper to plant different kinds of timber, such as oak, ash, and elm, in the hedge-rows, but by far the greater proportion of the former, as being the most valuable and least injurious to the growing crops: and, for the sake of an early supply, to plant in all situations not too dry for it a pollard willow between each two timber trees, which would soon give a quantity of useful top-wood for hurdles, fences, and other purposes: and when the trunks became of a tolerable size, they would be extremely valuable in the constructing of cabins and small buildings, and might then be taken down to give room for the growth of the larger timber

The soil in general, as well as the climate, is admirably adapted to turnips and cultivated grasses; and from their being new to it, large crops would be produced. There are few countries where oxen could be more advantageously worked, and the land presents scarcely any hindrances to it.

Though the south of Ireland is in general a hilly country, yet, except in the mountainous parts, the hills are not cold, and are, for the most part, culturable to the summits. It may, upon the whole, be called a middle-soiled country.

The turn-wrist plough, in many situations, would be a most useful implement.

There are numberless opportunities in which the small streams issuing from the hills could be successfully employed in irrigation; but as this is rather a refinement requiring a capital to be expended to prepare the land for it, I lay but little stress on its

immediate adoption. In proper time it would take place.

The benefits of such a course of husbandry would be, that a few cows would be kept on each arable farm, and collectively furnish as much butter as is at present produced from the grazing land, or perhaps even more.

The milk would be more equally distributed amongst the labourers and their families; the artificial grasses would be a source of food for the working oxen and these cows, during the summer, and, together with the turnips or potatoes, would fatten some of them in winter: this also would be the means of producing an additional quantity of manure.

The rich pasture-grounds, by having the supply of cattle bred on the arable farms, would become wholly appropriated to summer grazing, and receive the oxen as they were thrown off from work.

The increase of the stock of sheep, and the use of the fold, would contribute to a larger supply of manure; their wool would give employment to numbers in manufacturing it, and their mutton would be so much added to the stock of national subsistence.

In this practice also more beef would be fed, and perhaps fewer hogs kept, than at present; and the reduced numbers be partly fed, or what the graziers call finished, on corn, which would prevent the necessity of keeping them to the great age of from two to three years. The pork would be of superior quality, as being both more nutritive, and much less liable to waste, when carried into warm climates. Combining these two calculations, I should scarcely think it too much to assert, that one pound of it would be equal in point of value to two pounds of the present, which is fed on potatoes only; a species of feeding which will never bring the pork to any tolerable degree of

fatness and firmness under a considerable age.

I mention these circumstances the more fully, as I know it to be a received opinion in Ireland, that hogs cannot be profitably fed on corn, and that the feeding a quantity of pork in the manner it is now done is essentially necessary to the good of the country.

THE question now remains, how are all these desirable improvements to be brought into general use? For I have already said that I fear, under existing circumstances, it cannot be accomplished by means of the Agricultural Societies; at any rate, the progress would be slow and limited.

No plan appears to me to be so prompt and effectual as the introduction of resident practical husbandmen, and with them proper implements of husbandry, and other means of carrying on a farm. The present state of

things, however, offers no temptation to induce them to leave their homes and settle there; and it can only be expected by holding out to them encouragement to do it. To promote this object, suppose every considerable land-owner were to grant to one or more of them, according to the extent of his estate, a long and advantageous lease of about an hundred acres each, with a restriction from disposing of the lease, which should continue in succession to his family, to the end of the term, provided they themselves cultivated the land.

Men of property, however, would scarcely, even with this advantage, be induced to leave their friends and country; it would therefore be necessary to give, by way of bounty, a small capital to intelligent husbandmen, to purchase implements and carry on such a farm.

All this cannot be expected to come from the generality of landed men, and therefore

I would propose that in all cases where the landlord would grant a suitable lease, the State should give the bounty. As the rent would be low, and labour cheap, I think a sum advanced to each of about three hundred pounds would answer the purpose.

I have mentioned the quantity of about an hundred acres, as being sufficient to offer encouragement, and on which a regular systematic course of husbandry, with a small fold of sheep, could be carried on. As the conditions of giving this bounty, I would propose, that a stated proportion of it should be laid out in the purchase of some proper implements, a moderate number of sheep, of a kind suitable to the land, and also some turnip and cultivated grass seed.

For this purpose, the money might be paid them by instalments, part at first, for the purchase of this stock, and the remainder when they became resident.

It would, however, be proper that no persons should be chosen but such as could obtain from the clergyman of their parish a certificate of the sobriety of their life and manners; and also a certificate from persons qualified to judge, that they were industrious, and skilful, practical husbandmen. They should further be required to find security that the money advanced would be laid out in the purchase of the stipulated stock, and that it should be taken with them to their allotted farm, which farm if they were shortly afterwards disposed to relinquish, the stock should be left on it for a successor; but if they continued a given number of years, and then wished to quit it, the successor in that case should pay a valuation for it.

With these encouragements, I am persuaded an abundant number of intelligent and good husbandmen, who are now only a superior class of labourers, but would then

become men of property, would be induced to go from this country, and settle in Ireland.

It would be desirable that they should be chosen as much as could be from those counties where the sheep-fold and the working of oxen are in use, as that course of husbandry is to be recommended.

The good effects of the establishment of these people would not be confined merely to the improvements in husbandry which the neighbouring tenants would gain from their example; they would extend also to the introduction of cleanliness and comfort into their dwellings.

A taste for those minor domestic enjoyments I should hail as the most certain harbinger of a general spirit of industry and good order among the Irish; of increasing attachment to their homes and their country.

But while such blessings are wanting,

while the peasant, after his daily toil is ended, has only to return to a comfortless and filthy habitation, to view his family ill ordered and ill provided for, without any opening prospect for himself or them; in this dreary situation, his mind must grow sullen and gloomy.

Nature has indeed implanted in him the instinctive desire of providing for his own; but his exertions will go no further than to the supply of their most clamorous urgent wants. They are the exertions of reluctant labour, goaded by necessity, and embittered by discontent.

It may be objected to the plan which I have suggested for the introduction of a happier spirit among them, that the native inhabitants would view the arrival of strangers with no favourable eye; but were it shewn and explained to them, that they came to bring them improvements in husbandry; and were the land-owners further to make it a condition that these new

settlers should, for a given time, dispose annually of a proportion of the produce of their seeds and live stock, or even that they should, for the first five years, pay their rent in kind, to be distributed gratis among the other tenants, I think it would remove all difficulties of this kind.

Suppose a sufficient number of landlords could be found to lease five hundred farms of this kind, the bounty would only amount to an hundred and fifty thousand pounds; a sum, I am convinced, very trifling, when compared with the infinite good that would immediately result from it; and let the experiment be first made in those districts the most ready and disposed to receive the advantages of it.

In respect to that desirable object, the raising live hedges, and hedge-row timber, for farm buildings and other purposes, I think it would be necessary that every lease should contain a condition on the part of the landlord to pay a certain sum for every

tree, according to its size and growth, which had been planted, and was preserved on the farm at the conclusion of the lease, and the same means might be adopted for the planting of hedges and timber, even on those farms which are out on long leases, at least in cases where there are not many intermediate persons concerned between the owner of the soil and the cultivator of it. The former would run no risk by entering into an engagement of this kind, as he would have nothing to pay till he came into possession of what was of considerably more value than the sum to be given; and the tenant, by becoming a partner in the profit of growing the timber, would have an interest in planting and preserving it.

Were the farms of Ireland properly divided by live hedges and a moderate quantity of timber in these fences, without taking into the account what might be grown in the glens and other waste land, it would

furnish a quantity far exceeding what the consumption of the country would require, and be a source for an abundant supply of ship-timber.

If, in aid of these plans, the Agricultural Societies would principally give their premiums for planting hedges and timber, and for the encouragement of spinning and otherwise manufacturing wool in the homes of the different families, and perhaps some in bounties for the importation of a small breed of cows, such as the smallest hardy Welsh sort, to bring them within the means of purchase to those people who now only keep one or two hogs, I think it would produce the best consequences; and I would also recommend that some small premiums should be given to those who provided a convenient shelter for their stock separate from their cabin.

As I may not again have occasion to men-

tion these Societies, I shall here make an observation which relates less indeed to them than to a false estimate which has been formed in consequence of their exertions, which is, that land, from the improved state of husbandry expected from them, will become much more valuable than at present, and give greater room for trafficking in advanced rents. But let me caution those who think so, against such speculations.

Nothing but the greatest exertions to improve the agriculture of the country can keep the value of it where it is; and whenever a fall in the price of provisions takes place, either from our colonies having a foreign supply, or from any other causes, the bubble must break, and the price of land go back to that point at which the average of circumstances can hold it; which would bring ruinous consequences on many.

I SHALL now attempt to offer some suggestions for improving the situation of the country in respect to its churches and glebe houses; in doing which I feel greater diffidence than I did on the subject of agriculture, but by no means less zeal. It is a subject on which depend the instruction and information of the poor, the security and respectability of the rich, the prosperity and advancement of the Protestant religion; in short, whatever is valuable to individuals and the state rests upon it.

I am anxious to avoid writing in a manner which may cause it to be supposed that what I say is from opposition to other forms of religion. But approving and cherishing my own, I wish to see proper efficacy given to its institutions.

By the statement which I have produced from a respectable work, it appears how few churches there are in the southern part of Ireland, compared either with the popula-

tion or number of parishes. No means therefore exist, in many large districts, for the instruction of those who profess that form of worship; and no door was open for the admission of such as might otherwise have been disposed to enter. The consequences which have resulted were natural. The inhabitants have followed such forms of worship as they found the most ready opportunities of adopting, and embraced the tenets of those who were the most earnest to advise and eager to instruct them.

To state a case. Let it be supposed for a moment that every church and glebe house throughout the island were suffered to go to decay, and there were neither places of worship for the members of the established religion, nor any resident clergy to instruct them; let me ask how long could the followers of it be supposed to retain their tenets? or would there be any just cause of

surprise that it was overthrown and supplanted by others?

Viewing the progressive alienation from the established religion which must ensue from the defective system under which it is administered, I think it is not too much to say, that if the nation wishes any longer to uphold the established religion, and no other fund for building and keeping churches in repair can be had, it must be done, at least till one is found, at the public expense.

In the execution of this work every care should be taken that the money appropriated to the purpose should be economically and properly expended, according to the circumstances of each particular parish.

Some parishes having but very few inhabitants of that persuasion, a small church would suffice; but as it is impossible to say to what extent that number may increase, it would not be advisable to erect the building

on too small a scale; and, on the other hand, it might be inconvenient to spare sufficient money at once to supply every parish with a large church.

I would, therefore, suggest that such plans, or perhaps such a general one, should be chosen for churches, that, if built at first on a small scale, they might have additions made to them from time to time, without interrupting the order or beauty of the building. Thus, in some parishes, where a very small one was wanted, a church of the least dimension might be at first built, and in others of a greater, according to the extent required. As timber likewise would be the material the most difficult and costly to be procured, the others being in general near at hand, it would be necessary to pay attention in forming the plan, that it should be one which would demand the least proportion of timber, or at any rate that it

should not require an extravagant expenditure of it.

The same observations equally hold good for building parsonage houses.

Let a plan be adopted for a moderate-sized convenient house, with a facility of having additions made to it, if the incumbent choose to make them.

In cases where the livings are valuable, as in many cases they are, I see no reason why a sum of money should not be borrowed for building the parsonage, and a portion of the income allotted for paying it. It might begin with livings of the value of four or five hundred pounds a year, which might pay a proportionate part; and others of greater value a larger share, till it ended in the highest class paying the whole sum required.

Even before such a plan could be brought into practice, it would be highly beneficial were the patrons of livings to make it a condition, in the case of opulent benefices,

that the incumbent should expend a given sum in building a glebe house; and as, in many cases, two parishes are formed into one, the great extent of it renders a second church and house for a resident curate absolutely necessary.

From the work which I have before quoted, it appears that there are in Ireland 1120 benefices; and I reckon the number of culturable acres to be sixteen millions. Estimating then the tithe at only one shilling per acre, though in many districts it is worth considerably more even at present, and were the land brought fully into cultivation, would be worth double, and in most cases even triple that sum, the average value of livings will exceed seven hundred pounds per year; a sum abundantly adequate to the expense of building a parsonage where it is wanting, and to the respectable maintenance of a resident clergyman.

I know it to be a most delicate subject to touch on; but as it would add so much to

the comfort and independence of the resident clergy that a commutation and allotment of land for tithes should take place, I cannot help making some remarks on it.

A mistaken idea prevails, that the payment of tithes is a tax on the cultivator, instead of a right attached to, and even a part of the title to the land itself. Estates are bought and sold subject to it. The price of purchase and the value of rent are proportioned to it. It is the landlord, and not the tenant, who would immediately gain by the abolition of tithes, as he would in future demand the more rent.

The former opinion, however, having gained ground, great difficulties have occurred in the collection of tithes, and in consequence they have in many cases been let on advantageous terms to the collector. As this description of people was interested in the confusions which had taken place, and another, which I have formerly described, the speculators who had taken

land on long leases for the purpose of re-letting at higher rents, was equally so, since the less tithe was paid, the higher rent they could obtain, it was not to be expected that either of the parties should exert themselves to conciliate the good-will of the people, or assist the regular collection of tithes for those to whom they were due: and the evil has progressively increased.

In the present posture of things, therefore, I think nothing effectual can be done, but by means of a commutation in an allotment of land in lieu of them; which I consider could easily be effected by the appointment of commissioners with powers similar to those given by acts for inclosures.

In the lands allotted I would have a moderate number of timber-trees planted in the hedge-rows, and the incumbent made responsible for their preservation, or for the due application of the timber to the repairs of the church and parsonage; and in case

of any being cut down for this purpose, others should be planted, to keep up the number complete.

It would much exceed the limits of my present design to examine the policy of the system of parochial laws adopted in Great Britain as applicable to Ireland. Neither have I sufficient confidence in my abilities to venture into a labyrinth in which the wisest have found themselves bewildered. Like all human institutions, those laws have defects; and I am conscious that in the execution of them abuses frequently occur. The idle and clamorous often gain from them what was designed only for the industrious and needy; but it were better that abuses should sometimes take place from too much being done, than that much should be left undone.

This country has flourished under them for ages, and I hope never to see them abo-

lished without the substitution of such measures as should at once bear stamped upon them the fullest demonstration of superior merit.

Whether such laws may or may not be suited to Ireland, I shall leave to others to determine; but I say, and say it with the deepest concern, that there is at present no other claim upon the rich for the support of a large mass of indigent population in that country, than by an appeal to voluntary contribution.

Having, in a former part of this Inquiry, endeavoured to point out the injustice and inadequacy of this mode, I shall not in this place repeat those observations.

But to the injustice, I must add the insufficiency of it: for let the stream of private charity flow ever so largely in Ireland, it must still fall short of the demand, where all around is misery.

HAVING now offered my thoughts on the different heads which I proposed, I submit them, with the greatest diffidence, to the consideration of the public, from whose judgment I must learn how far I am right in supposing the want of prosperity in the country to have arisen from the causes to which I have referred it, and whether the means I have suggested will be conducive to the desired end. I beg leave, however, to offer a few general remarks.

That Providence has been eminently bountiful to the sister island in the productions of nature, no one who has ever viewed it attentively will attempt to deny. It abounds in noble rivers and harbours, which give opportunity for extensive commerce, at the same time that they afford a plentiful supply of food in their kind.

Seconded by a mild climate, its soil is equally adapted to cultivation with that of

most other countries of the same extent, and amply repays man for his labour.

The people, even the most uninformed, possess a keen intelligence which I have never seen exceeded. They are of a high and independent spirit, with a hasty temper, and strong prejudice in favour of their country, which the artful and designing too often convert to the worst purposes, from the want of better information being diffused amongst the lower orders.

The occasional disputes and sanguinary encounters which take place between the clans at fairs and other public meetings, are evidences of a natural courage violently breaking out with undisciplined fury, but bring no proof to my mind that they are incapable of governing it, were the advantages of education afforded them.

In the common occurrences of life they are by no means guilty of rudeness to their superiors, whose notice they are always

anxious to obtain. To strangers they are hospitable; even the poorest amongst them will at all times bid a hearty welcome to his humble meal.

Examples are by no means rare among them of generous service and benevolence, of patience and fortitude in misfortune, of resignation under the pressure of sickness and the calamities of age. Are these virtues? Then the Irish are not wanting in them.

Let it not, however, be supposed that I am describing the profligate and knavish, who infest cities, or those wretched outcasts whom crimes have made desperate; such will ever abound in all populous countries, and I lament to say their places will be succeeded by others like themselves—

"But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
"When once destroy'd, can never be supply'd."

That the people of a country so gifted and favoured by nature should be what at this moment they are, is a fact which brings with it the most painful reflections, and demands for them most loudly the best efforts of the superintending care and wisdom of the State. Indeed I fondly flatter myself, that, were some prompt and strenuous exertions put forth, the happiest effects would soon follow.

By providing churches and residences for the clergy, religion would be promoted, and the poor be instructed.

The improvements in agriculture would bring prosperity and encourage commerce; this would tend to fill up those voids which now appear in the ranks of society; and the clergy and country gentlemen would be surrounded by a suitable rank of industrious and well-informed men.

By encouraging the inhabitants of Great